#14
WHY I TRUST YOU

OZAKI-SAN WAS RIOLA...

IT REALLY IS!
SHE LOOKS SIMILAR... BUT IS IT REALLY HER...?
YOUR MENTOR WAS PART OF RIOLA!
Riola
YOU WERE DECEIVED, SEMPAI!
.....
I BET SHE WAS ONLY TRYING TO SELFISHLY PROJECT HER OWN IDOL DREAMS ONTO SEMPAI!
She only cares about herself!
THAT WOMAN~
HOW DARE SHE TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SEMPAI
GIVE IT UP AND COME BACK TO THE NET NOW, PLEASE, SEMPAI.
I TOLD YOU YOU COULDN'T TRUST PEOPLE AND BECOME A REAL IDOL.
NO WAY...
I BET YOUR MENTOR PLANNED THAT CURSE BUSINESS, TOO!

I DON'T WANT YOU TO GET HURT ANYMORE, SEMPAI!!
BUT...
IF I GO BACK...
WHAT IF ALL OF THIS IS A MISUNDER-STANDING...?
WHAT WOULD I SAY TO OZAKI-SAN...?
IF YOU DOUBT HER, THEN WE'LL CATCH HER IN THE ACT.
THAT WAY WE CAN FIND THE TRUTH
...THE ACT

IDOL CLASSIC TOURNAMENT
DAY OF THE FIRST QUALIFICATIONS
OZAKI-SAN...

IT'S FINALLY HERE...
FINALLY...
THAT'S AN EVIL FACE...
TODAY I'LL FINALLY CATCH THAT CRIMINAL PIG...!
I CAN'T WORRY ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS TODAY...
IF NOTHING HAPPENS, THAT'S FINE...
IT WAS JUST A MISUNDER-STANDING...
...PAI!
SEMPAI!

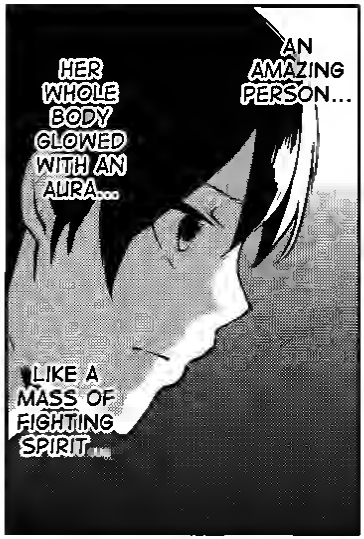
EH?
WHERE IS YOUR MENTOR?
AH...
SHE WENT TO TAKE CARE OF SOME MINOR BUSINESS..
WE GOT SEPARATED WHEN THE CROWD MOVED IN...
WHAT'S THAT!
THAT'S SUSPICIOUS!
EXPLOSIVELY SUSPICIOUS!
I BET SHE'S PLANNING TO DO SOMETHING AT TODAY'S AUDITION...
NO WAY...
!?
MIZUTANI ERI, AREN'T YOU!!
YOU ARE~...?

DON'T GET COCKY JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE A LITTLE BIT POPULAR!!

?
?
DO YOU THINK THIS EVENT IS BELOW YOU, ARE YOU GOING TO WITHDRAW?
BIG MISTAKE!
S-SEMPAI... WHO IS THIS HYSTERICAL GIRL...?
I-I DON'T KNOW...
HAA!? HASN'T RYOU TOLD YOU ABOUT ME?
HIUU...
YOU NEED TO PAY BETTER ATTENTION TO YOUR COMPETITION!!
I-I'M SORRY...
HUH...
I'VE BEEN PREOCCUPIED WITH OTHER THINGS...
AM I THAT UN-IMPORTANT ...?

SAKURAI-SAN...
AND I AM GOING TO DEFEAT YOU IN THIS COMPETITION!
MY NAME IS SAKURAI YUMEKO
FINE... I'LL TELL YOU.
すぅ
ふぅ
...っ
PLEASE LOOK AFTER ME TODAY...?
UM...
すぅ...
SOMEHOW, TALKING WITH YOU THROWS ME OFF.
YOU'RE PRETTY POLITE TOWARD ONE OF YOUR RIVALS...

I DON'T WANT TO GET COZY WITH YOU
OKAY?
THIS WORLD ISN'T SO KIND AS TO LET YOU LIVE LIKE THAT.
YOU NEED TALENT AND MOTIVATION TO SURVIVE, NOT JUST A DREAM.
ONLY ONE OF US GETS TO WIN, AND I'M NOT GOING TO ROLL OVER AND LET YOU HAVE IT.
AREN'T YOU EVEN GOING TO TALK BACK?
WELL, WHATEVER
.....
MY NAME IS GOING TO BE KNOWN AS TOP IDOL IN THE FUTURE
KEEP THAT IN MIND.


AN AMAZING PERSON...
HER WHOLE BODY GLOWED WITH AN AURA...
LIKE A MASS OF FIGHTING SPIRIT...

THE OPPONENT IN THIS PRELIMINARY... I DIDN'T INVESTIGATE AT ALL...
WHAT WAS THAT ALL ABOUT... THAT...

YEAH...
SO SHE CLAIMS TO BE YOUR RIVAL...
はっ

AH...
YEAH...
LET'S HURRY UP AND LOOK FOR HER!
SEMPAI! WE STILL HAVE TO FIND THAT CRIMINAL!

C-CAREFUL, CAREFUL
CINERIA... IT'S TOO DARK FOR ME TO SEE...
WE CAN'T TURN ON THE LIGHTS, THOUGH.
WE'D GET CAUGHT.
AH...
ナデ
!?
LOOK OUT, SEMPAI!

DID YOU THINK I WOULD DO SOMETHING TO YOU?
EVEN THOUGH THIS IS A RARE CHANCE-
ZREEE

HIU...
CINERIA ...
IF YOU'RE ALRIGHT...
PLEASE GET OFF...
U HE HE HE

YOU'RE... KINDA HEAVY...
ちか
!?

!?
OZAKI... SAN...?
WHAT COULD SHE BE DOING IN HERE....

DOES THIS PROVE ANYTHING...?
IT'S STRANGE! CLEARLY YOUR MENTOR IS A CRIMINAL!
I'M GOING TO CROSS-EXAMINE HER RIGHT NOW...
AH... WAIT, CINERIA...
AH...
HIUU...
W... WHO'S THERE!?
!?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE...WHAT ABOUT YOUR PERFORMANCE ...?
ERI...!?
OUCH...
WHA...!
WHY ARE YOU HERE, TOO!
WHA...
CONFESS YOUR SINS!
WE'RE HERE BECAUSE WE KNOW YOU'RE UP TO SOMETHING!
DON'T TRY TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT!
HUH!?
YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO ESCAPE!

DON'T TELL ME...
YOU'RE TRYING... TO PUT THE OTHER COMPETITORS AT A DIS-ADVANTAGE...
OZAKI-SAN...
RIGHT NOW... WHAT ARE YOU DOING...?
!
I'M JUST CHECKING ON THE STAGE EQUIPMENT...
EH...? OH, THIS...
HUH?
HOW MUCH OF A FOOL DID YOU THINK SEMPAI WOULD BE?
STILL TRYING TO PLAY INNOCENT, I SEE.

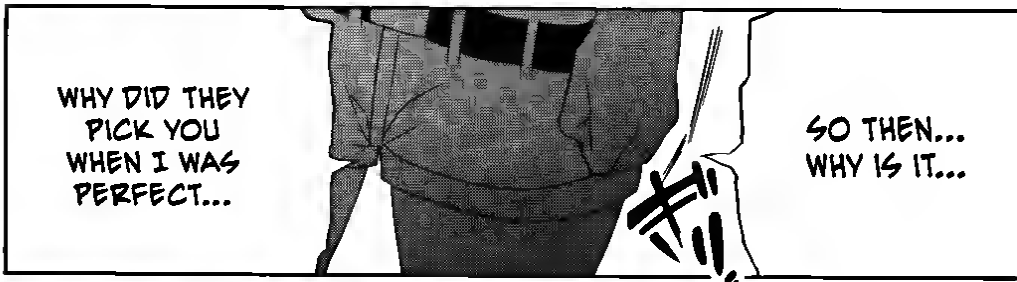
YOU'RE...
RIOLA, AREN'T YOU?
!?
EVEN THOUGH YOU WERE RIOLA, YOU LIED TO SEMPAI
WHY... THAT WAS...
I INVESTIGATED YOU WITH THE POWER OF THE NET.
YOU'RE THE PRIME SUSPECT BEHIND THE CURSE!!
WHAT KIND OF NON-SENSE IS THAT!!?
THEN TELL US WHAT YOU'RE DOING NOW!
THAT'S BECAUSE...

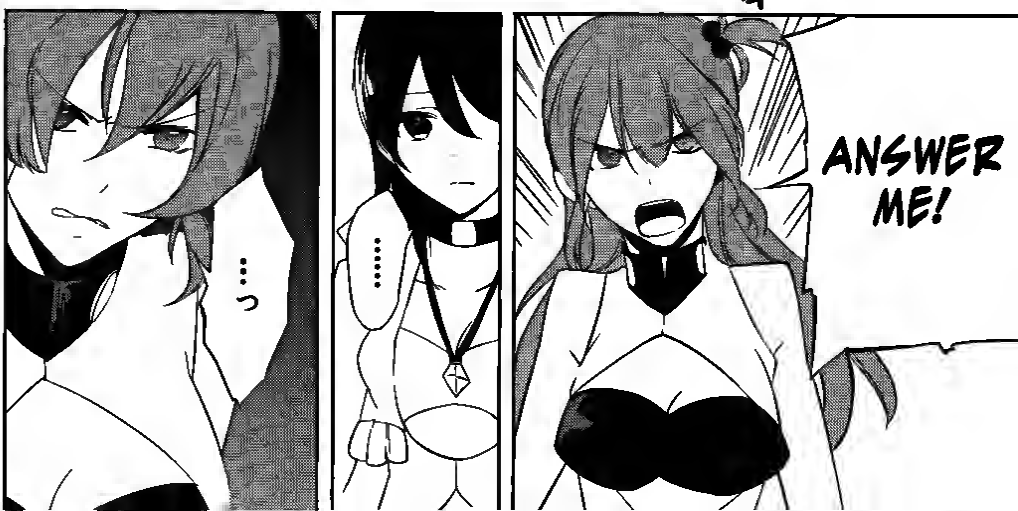
THAT'S ENOUGH ...!!
YOU STILL DON'T UNDER-STAND...!
THAT'S NOT IT, ERI...!
PLEASE!
TRUST ME!
ERI...
THAT'S... ENOUGH...
OZAKI-SAN... DON'T LIE ANYMORE...

ERI...
WHEN THIS AUDITION IS OVER...
TELL ME...
DON'T RUN! YOU HAVE TO BE PUNISHED FOR YOUR DECEPTIONS UNTIL NOW!
WE WILL NOW ANNOUNCE THE CANDIDATE WHO PASSED

THE QUALIFIER FROM THE PRELIMINARY ROUND OF THE IDOL CLASSIC TOURNAMENT IS...
ENTRY NUMBER 7!
MIZUTANI ERI-SAN!
!!?
EVERYONE ELSE, BETTER LUCK NEXT TIME.
W-WAIT A MINUTE! THIS ISN'T FUNNY!
DID THE JUDGES NOTICE ANYTHING STRANGE GOING ON BEHIND THE SCENES!?
?
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
THIS RESULT WAS REACHED IN A FAIR MANNER.
NO WAY...
THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT...
HOW COULD I LOSE...

I SEE RIGHT THROUGH YOUR NASTY LITTLE FACADE.
YOU... FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE AUDITION SOMETHING WAS ODD ABOUT YOU...
っ……


WHY DID THEY PICK YOU WHEN I WAS PERFECT...
SO THEN... WHY IS IT...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ANSWER ME!

I WON'T LET YOU GET AWAY WITH THIS!
I WON'T LET YOU...
SEMPAI!
YOU WON!
YOU BEAT THAT HYSTERICAL GIRL!
GOOD JOB, ERI.
!
YEAH...

I NEVER DID ANY-THING.
PLEASE BELIEVE ME
I NEVER INTERFERED WITH OTHER COMPE-TITORS
SEMPAI, IT'S FINE IF YOU SEVER YOUR TIES WITH THIS WOMAN.
WHAT NOW?
ERI...
THERE'S COMPLICATED CIRCUM-STANCES...
YOU HID YOUR IDENTITY AS RIOLA FROM SEMPAI!
THE CIRCUM-STANCES DON'T MATTER!

BUT IT WAS ALWAYS JUST A ONE WAY STREET...
SO I THOUGHT THAT MEANT OZAKI-SAN TRUSTED ME, TOO...
BECAUSE... I'VE ALWAYS TRUSTED EVERYTHING YOU TOLD ME, OZAKI-SAN...
.....
I DON'T UNDER-STAND WHAT YOU'RE SAYING—.
BUT I'M NOT GOING TO FIND OUT, AM I...
IF I DID MY BEST IN TODAY'S AUDITION, I THOUGHT I WOULD FIND A REASON TO KEEP WORKING FOR OZAKI-SAN...
ERI...

I...
IF I CAN'T TRUST YOU ANY-MORE...
I CAN'T SING...
GOODBYE
OZAKI-SAN...